Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Saskatchewan 2005 – 2006

ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN

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SASKATCHEWAN

OFFICE OF THE
CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER

July 26, 2006

The Honourable P. Myron Kowalsky
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
129 Legislative Building
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 0B3

Honourable Speaker:

Pursuant to section 286.1 of *The Election Act, 1996*, I have the distinct privilege of presenting the Annual Report of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

This Annual Report highlights office activities for the period April 1, 2005 through March 31, 2006.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Ouellet
Chief Electoral Officer
Encl.

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER OF SASKATCHEWAN

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I. Message of the Chief Electoral Officer

It is a distinct honour and pleasure that I publish this Annual Report for the period April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006. This time period meets the request of the Office of the Provincial Auditor to have an Annual Report based on the Office's fiscal year.

The Province celebrated its centennial during the 2005 year; as we focussed on the past 100 years, it was an excellent opportunity to focus both on past successes and future renewal.

The Chief Electoral Officer, as an independent Officer of the Legislative Assembly, must possess neutrality, integrity, and be worthy of the trust of all the components of the voting public and political entities. The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer strives to achieve excellence in its administration and reaches this goal through the optimal use of the resources made available to it. The Chief Electoral Officer's role is to strengthen the Office's mission, uphold its values and enhance its vision, while remaining accountable for its performance. The Office must possess short, medium and long-term priorities. Furthermore, both the Members of the Legislative Assembly and the public need adequate information about the Office's goals and they must be able to measure the Office's achievements.

To that end, the Office has been working its way through the short-term priorities and beginning the medium-term priorities identified in the *Strategic Plan 2005-2011*, issued in June 2005.

Last year it was stated that the *Strategic Plan 2005-2011* will define where the organization is, where it will be going over the next seven years, how it is going to get there and, through measurable outcomes, evaluate its progress and ultimately determine if it got there or not. This report is the Office's first report card on how well the Office has progressed and where more attention needs to be paid.

The ultimate success of the Office may be achieved through a renewed partnership with legislators, political entities, and the electorate while at the same time maintaining or even strengthening the independence of the Office.

As I look ahead to the plans of this Office for the rest of this decade I see many changes arriving at this moment and in the horizon. There are the recently proclaimed amendments to *The Election Act, 1996*, which are being implemented during the current Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election. The Office has evaluated the technology in use in some other provinces with respect to list of electors software. The Office has chosen the technology, which is best suited for the needs of Saskatchewan; and now the adjustments have begun. Other future uses of technology are also worth further investigation.

New partnerships must be created with all elements of the voting population, and in particular, with the youth and the First Nations communities. Some initial steps have been made, but there is much more to be done. Positive experiences should lead to some success in their rate of participation. In the long-term, the Office also wants to develop a partnership with the Office of the Minister of Learning with a view to include a strong component of civic education in our schools as part of their curriculum.

The Office also intends to build constructive relationships with the media, since it is one of the most important means of reaching our stakeholders. Some initial steps are being taken during the current Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election and more will be done, as we get closer to a provincial general election.

Voting must also be made more accessible to all Saskatchewan electors. Through its reporting function, the Chief Electoral Officer must recommend to the Members of the Legislative Assembly various ways of making the voting process in Saskatchewan more user-friendly and more accessible. The Office needs to revisit and re-evaluate existing processes to determine why they are needed, how to better implement them and how to measure their success and effectiveness. This report adds two new recommendations as well as the recommendations from last year's Annual Report Compendium with updates.

Having a by-election or two between general elections can be used as a very important learning experience. The Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election, which is taking place as this report is written, is no exception. Various new approaches are being tested out (see details at page 13 in this report). Many of these initiatives will then be expanded for the preparations for a provincial general election.

Collectively we can create a made-in-Saskatchewan electoral process that responds to the needs of all our stakeholders.

Finally, I also wish to thank my staff for their dedicated work in carrying out and implementing the Strategic Plan for Elections Saskatchewan, the implementation of the amendments to *The Election Act, 1996*, as well as preparations for the current by-election now taking place.

Jean Ouellet
Chief Electoral Officer
June 2006

II. Executive Summary

From April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006 the Office, in addition to annual operational activities, undertook preparations to develop and implement strategic initiatives, which were outlined in the *Strategic Plan 2005-2011*, and expanded upon in the *Annual Report Compendium 2003-2005* of last year.

This Annual Report of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer outlines and discusses strategic initiatives and Office activities over a 12 month period including implementation of the amendments to *The Election Act, 1996*, as well as preparations for the current Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election.

The sections on the Mandate of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer and Planning Overview are detailed first. The details on progress on all short-term and some medium-term strategic initiatives follow.

A section on annual Elections Saskatchewan activities outlines annual activities with respect to constituency returning officers, registered political parties including registration, potential candidates and annual financing reporting, the political contributions tax credit system, annual/campaign period reporting, *Detail of Expenditures*, statutory compliance assistance and public disclosure.

The section on Operational Expenditures outlines expenditures of the central elections administration as well as the decentralized expenditures of the constituency returning officer. The 2005-2006 Financial Statements of Elections Saskatchewan and notes are also included as an Appendix.

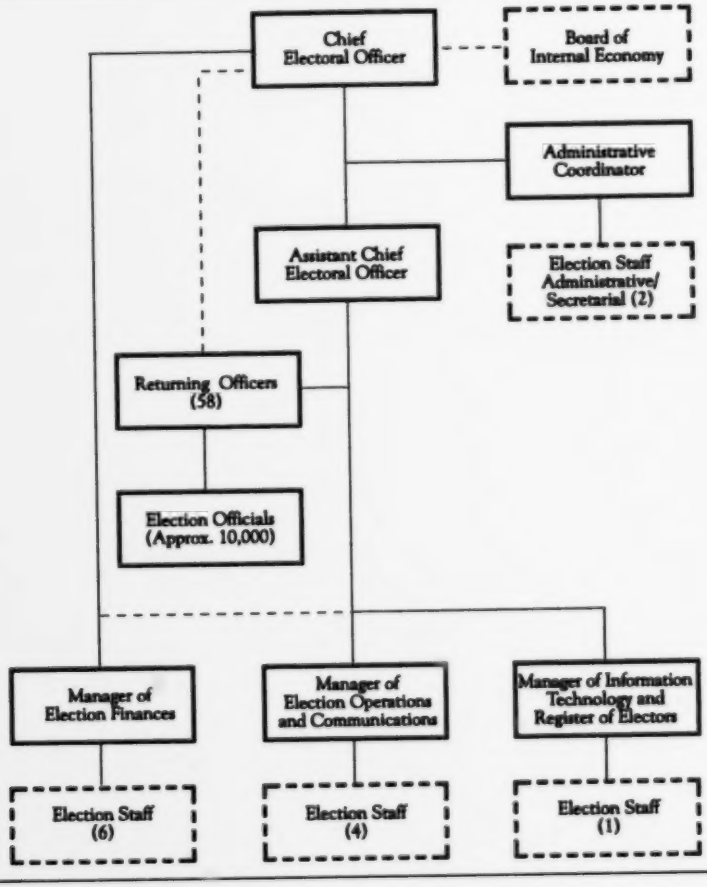
Liaison outlines Office deliberations with federal, provincial, and territorial election officials, as well as cooperation in both the local and international spheres including the Council on Government Ethics Laws, the Conference of Canadian Election Officials, the National Register of Electors Advisory Committee, the Electoral Technology Accord, Educational Liaison and Ongoing Liaison.

The Report concludes with new recommendations for future amendments to *The Election Act, 1996*, as well as a review of last year's recommendations, with updates.

III. Mandate of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

The Office is a non-partisan body charged with the mandate of directing and supervising the administrative and financial conduct of provincial electoral events. The Chief Electoral Officer, appointed by resolution of the Legislative Assembly, directs the Office and its activities. Under *The Election Act, 1996*, the Office is responsible for the administration of provincial elections, by-elections, enumerations (other than during a writ of election) and provincial elections finances. The Office is additionally charged with the administration of the Province's political contributions tax credit disclosure system under *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*. The Office periodically administers and oversees referenda and plebiscites under *The Referendum and Plebiscite Act* and time votes under *The Time Act*. The Office's mandate is supported by the contributions of administrative and professional personnel as detailed in the organizational chart below.

Organizational Chart - Elections Saskatchewan


Chief Electoral Officer
Board of Internal Economy
Administrative Coordinator
Assistant Chief Electoral Officer
Election Staff Administrative/ Secretarial (2)
Returning Officers (58)
Election Officials (Approx. 10,000)
Manager of Election Finances
Manager of Election Operations and Communications
Manager of Information Technology and Register of Electors
Election Staff (6)
Election Staff (4)
Election Staff (1)

The Election Act, 1996, places a duty on the Office to assist registered political parties, candidates, chief official agents and business managers to ensure compliance with financial transparency and disclosure requirements of *The Election Act, 1996*. In fulfillment of this duty, the Office publishes guidance documentation to assist chief official agents and business managers in discharging their administrative and financial reporting responsibilities, in compiling requisite support documentation, and in undertaking annual financial disclosure in accordance with *The Election Act, 1996*, and *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*. The Office also conducts electoral educational workshops throughout the Province to ensure effective execution of election activities.

The Office is responsible for assessing and reimbursing, where applicable, election expenses paid from the Province's Consolidated Revenue Fund. The Office has established a system of financial review to certify public reimbursement of election expenses through the examination and audit of registered political parties' and candidates' expense returns and requisite disclosure documentation. To promote transparency, expense return details are published and tabled in the Legislative Assembly for public review.

The Office is responsible for investigating suspected or alleged contraventions of *The Election Act, 1996*, as the Chief Electoral Officer considers necessary. The Office, in determining if an offence has been committed, considers whether the overall purposes, policy rationales and/or legislative intentions of *The Election Act, 1996*, were violated in the circumstances at issue. Where the Chief Electoral Officer determines that the alleged contravention is supported on the investigative evidence, the Office forwards the matter to the Department of Justice for prosecutorial review.

The Chief Electoral Officer reports annually to the Board of Internal Economy on budgetary matters and to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly on matters related to *The Election Act, 1996*. In addition to such annual reporting, the Chief Electoral Officer prepares and tables reports in the Legislative Assembly on all electoral specific activities. Provincial election results are published in the *Statement of Votes (Volume I)* and its complementary volume the *Report of the Chief Electoral Officer Campaign Contributions and Expenditures (Volume II)*. Administrative and financial reporting of constituency by-elections is encapsulated in individual statement of by-election reports.

The Office also maintains a public relations program to raise political stakeholder and public awareness of important aspects of the Office's mandate, to respond to public enquires and to liaise with registered political parties, candidates and their chief official agents and business managers.

IV. Planning Overview

In January 2005 the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, embarked on a strategic planning exercise.

- Three time frames were set for activities:
  - Short-Term Activities to be completed by April 1, 2006;
  - Medium-Term Activities to be completed by April 1, 2007; and
  - Long-Term Activities to be completed by April 1, 2011.

- **Elections Saskatchewan's Mission** was agreed upon:
  - To ensure the right of the people of Saskatchewan to participate freely in honest, open and fair electoral events, and to encourage the involvement of political parties, candidates and electors by raising their awareness and understanding of electoral processes that are transparent, efficient and accessible.

- **Elections Saskatchewan's Values** were agreed upon as follows:
  - To be **independent** and **non-partisan**;
  - To have **integrity**;
  - To be **open** and **transparent** in all activities;
  - To be **accountable** to electors and the members of the Legislative Assembly;
  - To be **efficient** in designing processes and ensuring financial accountability;
  - To be **effective** in electoral event delivery procedures and operations;
  - To be **innovative, creative** and **flexible** in delivering the present and preparing for the future;
  - To be **consultative** with all our stakeholders;
  - To be **professional** in all our activities; and
  - To create a **cooperative** working environment and encourage all of the election team to work together and to work with their stakeholders and partners.

- **Elections Saskatchewan's Vision** was also agreed upon:
  - A made-in-Saskatchewan electoral process that responds to the needs of all of our stakeholders.

Refer to www.elections.sk.ca for further information on Elections Saskatchewan's Mission and Values.

As promised, in the *Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Saskatchewan Compendium 2003-2005*, this year's Annual Report will include a measure of the Office's performance and will show whether or not the Office is meeting its objectives.

A. Short-Term (by April 1, 2006)

1. Develop and Implement a Change Management Strategy

Objectives:

Elections Saskatchewan should develop a comprehensive Change Management Strategy; this will encourage participation and commitment of the current staff, establish specific objectives, plans and measurable outcomes and gain support with other stakeholders. The following is a partial list of some of the things that should be included:

(a) Presentation of this Strategic Plan to the Board of Internal Economy, the Legislature, and the all-party committee;

(b) Publish and promulgate the Mission, Vision and Value documents developed in this Strategic Plan;

(c) Consult actively with all stakeholders, about this Strategic Plan and other opportunities;

(d) Consult actively with constituency returning officers and their election clerks; and

(e) Involve Elections Saskatchewan headquarters staff in these consultations and presentations.

Accomplishments:

(a) and (b) *Strategic Plan 2005-2011, which included the Mission, Vision and Value documents was distributed in CD format to the:*

- *Members of the Legislative Assembly;*
- *Returning Officers; and*
- *Registered Political Party Officials.*

Strategic Plan 2005-2011 was published on the Elections Saskatchewan Web site.

(c) *Consulted with Registered Political Party Advisory Committee.*

The Electoral Advisory Committee composed of representatives from each registered political party, which had been on hiatus since 2001, was revived. The committee met twice, once in November 2005 to discuss the Strategic Plan 2005-2011 and the then pending amendments to The Election Act, and once in April 2006 to discuss preparations for the pending by-election in Weyburn-Big Muddy. It is our intention to fully utilize this vehicle for communication more regularly than in the past. The Office has already announced another meeting following the current ongoing by-election, sometime in the fall of 2006. It is also hoped that this committee will be able to discuss new electoral technology, possible changes in procedures, etc. The Office believes that an Electoral Advisory Committee would be an excellent forum to discuss electoral issues with representatives of all registered political parties in the Province. To this end a recommendation to formalize the role of the advisory committee is also included in the section of this report entitled Recommendations - Amendments to The Election Act, 1996.

(d) Copies of the Strategic Plan 2005-2011 were distributed to all returning officers and the staff of the Office met with all returning officers across the Province in October 2005 to discuss the plan.

(e) Elections Saskatchewan headquarters staff were involved in these consultations and presentations.

2. Conduct a Strategic Impact Analysis of Bill 119, an Act to amend The Election Act, 1996

Objectives:

Elections Saskatchewan should conduct a Strategic Impact Analysis on the impact of the proposed revisions to *The Election Act, 1996*, on the organization; existing policies, procedures and guidelines; forms and other documents; and, day-to-day operations in both a non-election and election period. This will result in the development of action plans to ensure that the organization is prepared to implement the required changes, if required, prior to the next electoral event.

Accomplishments:

- The Assistant Chief Electoral Officer conducted a Strategic Impact Analysis on the impact of the proposed revisions to The Election Act, 1996.
- The entire office participated in a review of the analysis resulting in an action plan to implement the amendments prior to the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election.
- The implications of the amendments to The Election Act, 1996, were shared with returning officers and registered political party representatives in meetings in October and November 2005, respectively.

3. Develop a Stakeholder Outreach / Communications Strategy

Objectives:

Elections Saskatchewan needs to develop an outreach/communications strategy to raise the awareness of the electorate, in general, in regards to their democratic rights in the electoral process. More specifically, strategies are required to improve the voter turnout amongst the youth (the 18 to 24 year olds) and the First Nations sector of the electorate. In addition, an advertising strategy for the next general election should be developed.

Accomplishments:

- Communications Strategy
  - Work has begun to review the advertisements used in past elections.
  - In the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election, radio advertisements and news releases issued by the Office were used for the first time.

- **Youth Sector**
  - The Office was fortunate in obtaining the services of two communication interns for three months from September to November 2005 as part of the Canada World Youth Program. Serhiy Vakulich was from Ukraine. Liam O'Leary was from Nova Scotia via Toronto where he is attending university.
  - The assignment of the interns was to:
    (a) Research the Web sites of other electoral jurisdictions including those in Canada, United States and Australia;
    (b) Research the issue of youth voter turnout;
    (c) Draft a proposal for a youth portion for the Elections Saskatchewan Web site;
    (d) Write a report with recommendations about youth voting; and
    (e) As a result of their efforts, a youth section will be added to the Elections Saskatchewan Web site in the near future.
- **First Nations Sector**
  - The Office has begun to look at the community relations officer program used by Elections Canada's returning officers in their pre-election activities. The Office will be looking at adapting this program for the First Nations and Youth Sectors.
- **Web site**
  - At the issuance of the writ in October 2003, Elections Saskatchewan launched its Web site, which was very well received across the Province. Since that time some improvements have been made based on feedback from voters and the desire to make election financing more transparent.
  - A total revamp of the Web site is planned prior to April 1, 2007 in order to make it more user friendly.
  - More work has to be done after the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election to evaluate the communications strategy used for the by-election and to expand it for use at a general election building in specific First Nations and Youth Components.

4. Conduct a Strategic Analysis into the Automation of Electoral Geography Products

Objectives:

Currently all of the electoral maps, street guides and poll keys are generated manually. The cartographers required to manually prepare these products are becoming a scarce resource and may not be available to meet future requirements. Elections Saskatchewan must determine the strategic alternatives and an implementation plan to resolving this issue as soon as possible in order to meet the target date of election readiness for April 1, 2007. Consideration should be given to conducting a pilot project of the solution(s) selected, preferably in high-growth constituencies, as a "proof of concept". The map products currently available will allow Elections Saskatchewan to meet any requirements for electoral events in the meantime.

Accomplishments:

- An Electoral Geography Impact Analysis Study was completed in October 2005. In November 2005, the Manager of Election Operations and Communications and the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer took part in an Electoral Technology Accord workshop on Electoral Geography in Ottawa;
- After the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election:
  - Further follow-up with Information Services Corporation will take place; and
  - Preparations will begin for approximately 18 returning officers to begin in September to review their polling division maps where some polls have experienced large population growth.

5. Conduct a Strategic Analysis into the Impacts of Implementing a Permanent Electronic Voter's List

Objectives:

The second reading of Bill 119 contained an announcement that "One of the most significant recommendations of the committee was the development of a permanent electronic voter's list. Under the Bill, regulations will allow the Chief Electoral Officer to establish a process to ensure that Saskatchewan has a current and accurate voter's list."

This directive indicates that it would be prudent of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer to commission an immediate study into the strategic impacts and options of developing a permanent electronic voter's list for Saskatchewan.

This study would have been recommended irrespective of Bill 119 being introduced because it is a key element that must be reviewed as part of the Chief Electoral Officer's efforts to modernize and renew electoral processes in the province of Saskatchewan. The introduction, or studies in regards to the impacts of implementing automated registers of electors has been a major activity for most other electoral jurisdictions in Canada over the past ten years. Because of these activities, there is a wealth of information and experiences for Elections Saskatchewan to draw from in the conduct of this important study.

Accomplishments:

- Elections Saskatchewan received three generous offers for the intellectual property of List of Electors software (from Elections Ontario, Elections British Columbia and Elections Alberta);
- A consultant was hired to survey the three systems and to make a recommendation regarding which system best fit Saskatchewan's needs;
- After an extensive field application survey (November 2005) the consultant recommended Elections Alberta's Web-based Alberta Register Of Electors System (AROES);

- The Office has engaged the services of a systems consulting firm to make the necessary adjustments to AROES to make it the Saskatchewan specific Elections Saskatchewan Permanent Register Of Eligible Electors (ESPREE):
  - The firm that the Office has engaged is the original firm that developed AROES and has customized the software for Elections Northwest Territories and Elections Nunavut;
  - The software changes related to the list of electors are expected to be operative in the fall of 2006; and
  - Other components are anticipated for a completion date in early 2007;
- The Office anticipates the enactment of regulations that will allow the Chief Electoral Officer to immediately commence the process of ensuring that Saskatchewan has a current and accurate voter's list that will facilitate voting and communications in an election in a much more modern and efficient manner.

6. Conduct a Strategic Study to Implement a Contact Centre

Objectives:

This study is required to improve the effectiveness of communicating with stakeholders both in an electoral event and non-electoral event mode of operation. In past elections, all headquarters staff has been involved in the answering of all telephone calls, e-mail and other correspondence with stakeholders during an election. This was disruptive to the management of the electoral process and ineffective in meeting all of the demands for information. This initiative is operational in nature but is critical to freeing-up Elections Saskatchewan managers and staff to manage the successful conduct of the next general election while meeting the requirements for timely information from all stakeholders.

As well, the information collected on a day-to-day basis during an electoral event in regard to stakeholder queries will enable the management team at Elections Saskatchewan to be aware of stakeholder issues and take proactive steps to ensure those demands are being dealt with.

Accomplishments:

- A Contact Centre Strategy Study was completed by a consultant in September 2005; and
- Work is nearing completion for a draft RFP to be issued in the fall of 2006.

7. Conduct an Organizational Review

Objectives:

The current centralized and decentralized organizational structures and functions should be reviewed. This should be done after the other short-term strategic initiatives outlined above are completed because the outcomes of those studies could have major impacts on the functionality and structure of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer.

Accomplishments:

- *An organizational review took place. It was decided that now was not the time to make any major changes to the current organizational structure at least until after the provincial general election (anticipated in 2007).*

8. Conduct a Review of Current Policies, Procedures and Guidelines

Objectives:

The current policies, procedures and guidelines should be reviewed for opportunities for renewal/change or to fill gaps that may be identified. The first step should be to identify which ones should be reviewed immediately and which ones should be reviewed after the strategic initiatives identified above are completed.

Accomplishments:

- *A review took place of current policies, procedures and guidelines. As a result, a standardized format for policies was adopted and Policies on Mobile Polls, Absentee Voting, Acceptable Identification, Vouching and the Appointment of Returning Officers by the Chief Electoral Officer were developed. The development of policies and procedures and guidelines will be an ongoing project as the Office streamlines its training materials for returning officers, election clerks and other poll officials.*

9. Implement an Elections Finance Reporting System

Objectives:

Election expense reporting by political parties and candidates is a statutory requirement with specific time deadlines post election. Currently this is a manual paper-oriented process that is onerous for both those completing the documents and for Elections Saskatchewan to review. Automated tools should be developed that can be distributed to the business managers for candidates and the chief official agents for political parties. This would clarify the rules for reporting and simplify the preparation of these reports and facilitate the activity for everyone involved. This would also reduce the workload and time frames required for

Elections Saskatchewan staff to review the reports (currently five to seven months elapsed time) and should lead to more timely reimbursement of elections expenses.

Accomplishments:

- A consultant has begun to assess Elections Canada's Election Finance Reporting System with the hope of developing a similar software program. More work is progressing on this project.

10. Review and Update the Election Readiness Plan

Objectives:

The review and updating of the Election Readiness Plan is a critical initiative that must continue in parallel with the conduct of the other strategic initiatives outlined above. Some of these strategic initiatives may have major impacts on the Election Readiness Plan, but other situations may occur which necessitate changes or additions to the plan as well. The axiom that "the world doesn't stop while you plan" applies to this activity.

(a) Preparations for Weyburn-Big Muddy By-Election

Upon receipt of a subsection 40(1) notice under the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2005, the Chief Electoral Officer, as soon as practicable, informs the Lieutenant Governor in Council of any Member vacancy and must, in accordance with subsection 40.3(1) of the Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2005, hold a by-election to fill a vacancy within six months after a seat becomes vacant and notice of that vacancy has been given. Once the Member for Weyburn-Big Muddy tendered her resignation on February 28, 2006 preparations for a by-election went into high gear.

Accomplishments:

- By-elections are a useful time to test out possible innovations or pilot projects on a small scale.

  Some new initiatives for the by-election include the use of:
  - Posters to recruit enumerators;
  - Pre-writ action plans by the returning officer;
  - An access-based election daily operational plan (adapted from another jurisdiction);
  - Sending news releases to the media;
  - Radio advertising;
  - Canada Post electronic statement of mail to forward absentee ballot kits to absentee voters in Canada as well as outside of Canada;
  - Voter Information Cards (VICs) with poll location and advance poll location timely mailed by Canada Post to all voters who had been enumerated in all regular polls;

- Magnifying glasses at the poll for voters with some degree of visual impairment;
- Cardboard ballot boxes;
- Longer standardized office hours for returning office;
- Internet access for returning office;
- Mobile polls which visit several small personal care homes in the constituency (previously only large personal care facilities had their own half day or full day poll); and
- Post-election debriefing with returning officer and election clerk (via written report and in-person).

(b) Preparations for the Twenty-Sixth Provincial General Election

Accomplishments:

- Replacement of materials and forms which were changed due to the amendments proclaimed on March 22, 2006;
- Specific activities included the procedures for the appointment of constituency returning officers by the Chief Electoral Officer through a merit-based process;
- More work needs to be done as follows:
  - Training for the purpose of reviewing polling divisions in approximately 18 constituencies scheduled for Fall 2006;
  - The resulting revisions to maps, poll keys and urban street indexes for the 18 constituencies;
  - Constituency returning officer training. Most constituency returning officers and election clerks will receive a full three day training session prior to the writ of election. The sessions will be offered in Spring 2007 in both Regina and Saskatoon for the convenience of those attending.
- The three day training session will review constituency returning officer management responsibilities, electoral administration, personnel training, and outreach with registered political parties, candidates and the electorate. Specific constituency returning officer responsibilities reviewed included:
  - Selecting, appointing and training election officials (i.e., enumerators, deputy returning officers, poll clerks, etc.);
  - Planning and conducting enumerations, including the production of a constituency voter's list;
  - Distributing and receiving candidate nominations and election finance documentation;
  - Planning, organizing and conducting advance polling and election day voting; and
  - Communicating with political stakeholders, the public and the media.

11. Develop a Policy Framework

Objectives:

A new policy framework should be developed that outlines standards, processes and formats for the preparation of policies, guidelines and procedures. The existing policies, procedures and guidelines should be reviewed to ensure conformity with the new framework. A plan should be prepared for the development of new policies where required and the review and modification of existing policies. As strategic initiatives are undertaken, the policy issues should be considered and planned for.

Accomplishments:

- *A template for a new policy framework was developed. The new policy template has been used to develop five new policies (see Item #8 - Conduct a Review of Current Policies, Procedures and Guidelines for Details).*

B. Medium-Term (by April 1, 2007)

It is also worth noting the specific progress of a few of the medium-term initiatives.

1. Implement the Recommendation from the Organizational Review

This activity must be completed early in the 2006-2007 fiscal year in order to be election ready (organizationally). This may require additional staffing and training and will have an impact on the Election Readiness Plan.

As noted in Short-Term Initiative Number 7, it was decided that now was not the time to make any major changes to the current organizational structure at least until after the provincial general election (anticipated in 2007).

2. Continue to Implement the Change Management Strategy

The implementation of the Change Management Strategy should continue through this medium-term period. Some of the activities may not be concluded as planned due to other critical initiatives, (i.e., election readiness activities). It is important to maintain the momentum established in the short-term towards being an organization that embraces change in a proactive manner.

The Organization has embraced change as evidenced in:

- *Preparations for the current by-election in Weyburn-Big Muddy;*
- *Preparations for the next general election; and*

- Overall attitude of looking for possible improvements to all aspects of the organization while being careful not to make changes just for change sake if the process is working well.

3. Develop an Information Technology Strategy

Elections Saskatchewan's headquarters technology requirements are likely to be impacted by the studies conducted in the short-term in regards to implementing a permanent electronic voter's list, implementing a contact centre, implementing an election finance reporting system and potentially by some of the outreach strategies selected. It is important to consider the development of an information technology strategy once these other studies are completed.

This study would result in a blueprint for:

- The implementation of computerized business solutions (the applications architecture);
- The establishment of software standards (the software architecture);
- The installation of a standardized computer hardware infrastructure;
- The implementation of a telecommunication network (voice and data); and
- Using the Internet (enabling technology, not content).

At the time of writing of this report the development of this strategy has begun in earnest now that the Office has hired a Manager of Information Technology and Register of Electors.

4. Implement Changes from Bill 119

Objectives:

This initiative is dependant on the recommendations and plans developed as part of the Strategic Impacts Analysis conducted in the short-term. This is a critical initiative that must be completed prior to the next election.

The implementation of changes from Bill 119 is almost complete pending an evaluation of the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election.

VI. Annual Elections Saskatchewan Activities

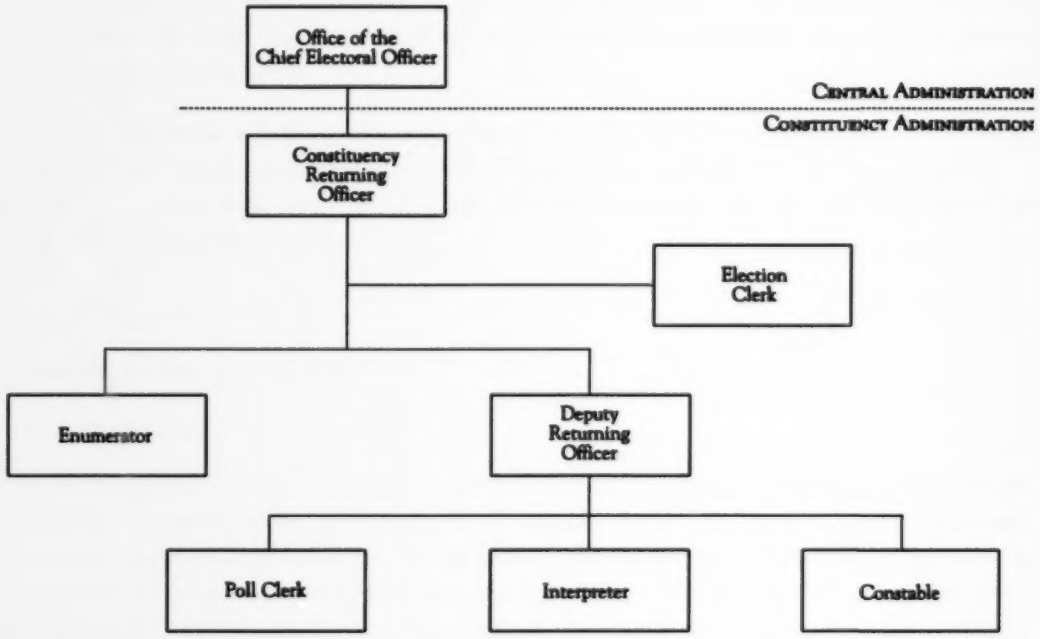
The mandate of the Office is defined by the unique and complex character of Saskatchewan's polity, including the inherent uncertainty of the provincial electoral cycle, the decentralized nature of electoral administration, and the multi-layered interaction among registered political parties, candidates and the electorate.

This section outlines specific Office activities undertaken to maintain a state of provincial election readiness.

A. Constituency Returning Officers

Central electoral administration is the responsibility of the Office, with regional operational conduct of electoral events being the responsibility of constituency returning officers. As representatives of the Office, constituency returning officers are entrusted with advancing the neutrality of the Province's decentralized electoral process by administering and reporting on electoral proceedings (general or by-elections, referenda and plebiscites). The decentralized nature of Elections Saskatchewan's electoral administration is depicted in the schematic below.

Decentralized Electoral Administration - Elections Saskatchewan



An important part of maintaining election readiness is having constituency returning officer appointments for the Province's 58 constituencies. All constituency returning officer appointments/cancellations from April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006, as promulgated in *The Saskatchewan Gazette*, are set out in the following table.

CONSTITUENCY RETURNING OFFICERS
(AS OF MARCH 31, 2005)

ORDER IN COUNCIL DATE/NUMBER	DATE GAZETTED VOLUME/NUMBER	APPOINTMENTS/CANCELLATIONS
August 9, 2005 (O.C. 619/2005)	August 19, 2005 (Vol. 101 No. 33)	*Cancellation:* Cumberland - Eileen (Cec) Williams; Cut Knife-Turtleford - Judy Jamieson; Regina Lakeview - Kate Bissell; and Regina Rosemont - Jody Tetlock. *Appointment:* Cumberland - Vicky L. Sanderson; Cut Knife-Turtleford - Larry James McDaid; Regina Lakeview - Marv Hendrickson and Regina Rosemount - Loretta A. Wesner.
February 24, 2006 (O.C. 86/2006)	March 10, 2006 (Vol. 102 No. 10)	*Cancellations:* Kelvington-Wadena - Carol A. Lowndes; Regina Lakeview - Marv Hendrickson; Swift Current - James B. Roberts; and Weyburn-Big Muddy - Wanda Lee Edwards. *Appointments:* Kelvington-Wadena - Gail Peterson; Regina Lakeview - June Mayhew de Jong; Swift Current - Beryl Dianne Robinson; and Weyburn-Big Muddy - Bryan Lester Wilson.

Constituency returning officer appointments/cancellations promulgated in *The Saskatchewan Gazette* to date are available for public review at Cabinet Secretariat, Department of Executive Council, 145 Legislative Building, Regina, Saskatchewan.

Constituency returning officer appointments have been Order in Council appointments. With the proclamation of amendments to *The Election Act, 1996*, proclaimed on March 22, 2006 any vacancies for returning officers that occur after March 22, 2006 are now appointments by the Chief Electoral Officer through an open competitive process.

B. REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES

1. REGISTRATION

Under section 224 of *The Election Act, 1996*, a political party may apply for registration any time between the days fixed for the return to a writ of general election and the fifth day after the issuance of the writ commencing the next general election. A registration application must be in prescribed form and be accompanied by a complete and accurate petition for registration. Each petition must be executed by no fewer than 2,500 eligible provincial voters, 1,000 of whom must reside in at least ten provincial constituencies, with a minimum of 100 voters in each of those respective constituencies. Concurrent

with its application and petition, a political party must file a written statement declaring that its primary purpose is to field candidates for election as Members of the Legislative Assembly. An audited financial statement must also be filed along with prescribed information in respect of the party's leader, senior officers, chief official agent and auditor.

Once the Office has reviewed all requisite registration documentation and vetted the application, the Chief Electoral Officer will register the political party and, in accordance with section 233 of *The Election Act, 1996*, publish its name in *The Saskatchewan Gazette*. A political party, once registered, is entitled to incur expenses, solicit and receive contributions, participate in the Province's political contributions tax credit system, and field candidates for election to the Legislative Assembly. Registered political parties in an election/by-election year are also entitled, where eligible, to reimbursement of a portion of lawfully incurred election expenses.

The Office approved the change of name from the New Green Alliance to Green Party of Saskatchewan on May 2, 2005.

On March 31, 2006, six political parties were registered in the Province. Their names, abbreviations, leaders and chief official agents, as recorded on the Register of Political Parties, are set out in the following table.

At the time of writing of this report two groups are in the process of preparing the requisite materials to register a political party.

REGISTERED POLITICAL PARTIES
(AS AT MARCH 31, 2005)

POLITICAL PARTY NAME	PARTY ABBREVIATION	PARTY LEADER	CHIEF OFFICIAL AGENT
Green Party of Saskatchewan	Green Party	Victor Lau	Deanna Robbilliard
New Democratic Party, Sask. Section	New Democratic Party (N.D.P.)	Lorne Calvert	Douglas Still
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	P.C. Party of Sask.	Rick Swenson	Terrence A. Leier
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	Liberal	David Karwacki	Alan McIntyre
Saskatchewan Party	Saskatchewan Party	Brad Wall	James Rybchuk
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (W.I.P.)	Western Independence Party (W.I.P.)	Gordon Elias	Sheila Houser

In accordance with section 232 of *The Election Act, 1996*, the Register of Political Parties is available for public inspection at Elections Saskatchewan.

2. Potential Candidates

In accordance with section 230 of *The Election Act, 1996*, any individual selected to be a candidate by a registered political party's constituency association, or being a person a party intends to endorse, must give written notice to that effect to the Office. Such notification must be filed in conjunction with the candidate's written appointment and consent of a business manager in accordance with section 236, and written appointment and consent of an auditor in accordance with section 238 of *The Election Act, 1996*. The Chief Electoral Office maintains a Register of Potential Candidates and information filed under section 236 and 238 of *The Election Act, 1996*, for public review.

As at March 31, 2006, no individuals were registered on the Register of Potential Candidates.

3. Annual Financing Reporting

In accordance with section 250 of *The Election Act, 1996*, the chief official agent of a registered political party shall annually file, prior to May 1st, an audited fiscal period return in prescribed form detailing that party's financial activities. This annual financial reporting is undertaken on a Registered Political Party's Fiscal Period Return (Form E-521). Form E-521 reporting excludes expenses incurred during an election campaign period - such expenses are reported pursuant to section 251 of *The Election Act, 1996*.

Form E-521 requires that individual donations of money and commercial value exceeding $250 received in a year from an individual, corporation, trade union, unincorporated organization or association or any other person or group of persons be reported. To deter contributions from third party agents, registered political parties must enclose with their Form E-521, copies, certified by the party's chief official agent, of every statement or document a party received pursuant to subsections 240(6) and (7) of *The Election Act, 1996*. An auditor's report filed in accordance with section 237 of *The Election Act, 1996*, must also accompany a registered political party's Form E-521.

As represented in their respective annual fiscal period returns filed on Form E-521, depicted in the following tables is a summary of registered political party contributions received, and expenses incurred, for the fiscal year 2005.

Fiscal Year 2005

Registered Political Party	Contributions: Total Contributions	Contributions: Cash on Hand	Expenses: Operating Expenses	Expenses: Advertising	Expenses: Other	Expenses: Total
Green Party of Saskatchewan	$8,386.61	$3,450.77	$1,790.01	-	$7,668.86	$9,458.87
New Democratic Party, Sask. Section	1,802,146.05	924,019.35	1,529,036.80	-	213,364.76	1,742,401.56
Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan	43,187.00	(2,458.00)	51,507.00	-	-	51,507.00
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	258,870	36,824.00	140,640.00	3,908.00	4,160.00	148,708.00
Saskatchewan Party	983,871.00	227,636.00	587,713.00	466.00	216,034.00	804,213.00
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (W.I.P.)	2,225.00	1,834.34	1,540.25	114.00	-	1,654.25

Note: The information provided for 2005 is from fiscal returns as filed. Office review is ongoing and any required change will be reported in the subsequent Annual Report.

Pursuant to section 232 of *The Election Act, 1996*, registered political party Form E-521 returns are available for public inspection at Elections Saskatchewan. These returns may also be viewed on the Elections Saskatchewan Web site.

C. Saskatchewan Political Contributions Tax Credit System

1. Introduction

The political contributions tax credit system provides provincial resident taxpayers, inclusive of individuals and corporations, the opportunity to claim tax credits based on eligible contributions made to a registered political party or independent candidate for which a valid tax receipt is obtained. *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act* governs the Province's political contributions tax credit system and provides the basis for calculating political contribution tax credits for use by provincial resident taxpayers under *The Income Tax Act, 2000*.

Tax receipts issued by registered political parties or independent candidates must conform to policies underlying the *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act* to qualify under *The Provincial Tax Act*. The Chief Electoral Officer has interpreted these policies to include the election of Members to the Legislative Assembly and necessarily related activities. Specifically, registered political parties and independent candidates may receipt contributions from provincial resident taxpayers, in accordance with the *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*, when those contributions are used to advance the democratic process in Saskatchewan.

2. Tax Receipts

Official income tax receipts are issued under section 8 of *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act* by a chief official agent on behalf of a registered political party or by a business manager in the case of an independent candidate. Only chief official agents whose names are recorded in the Register of Political Parties maintained by the Chief Electoral Officer can issue tax receipts. The business manager of an independent candidate is eligible to issue tax receipts if the constituency returning officer in accordance with subsection 48(2) of *The Election Act, 1996*, certifies the candidate's nomination.

Tax receipts may be issued for eligible contributions of $25.00 or more received by a registered political party or independent candidate.

Effective with the 2004 taxation year, the tax credit available to provincial resident taxpayers is calculated in accordance with the following formula:

- Where the total eligible contribution is $400 or less, the amount of the tax credit that a taxpayer is entitled to claim for a taxation year is 75 percent of the total contribution; or
- Where the total eligible contribution is greater than $400 but not greater than $750, the tax credit is $300 plus 50 percent of the amount by which the total contribution exceeds $400; and
- Where the total eligible contribution is greater than $750, the tax credit a taxpayer is entitled to claim is lesser of:
  - $475 plus 33 percent of the amount by which the total contribution exceeds $750; or
  - $650.

3. Annual/Campaign Period Reporting

In accordance with section 13 of *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*, a chief official agent of a participating registered political party must file a reconciliation of tax receipts used for the preceding calendar year. This reconciliation is filed with the Chief Electoral Officer in prescribed form on or by the last day of April. This annual reporting is undertaken on the Annual Report of Contributions (Registered Political Party) (Form P-602) and details the aggregate amount of contributions receipted, the number of tax receipts issued, spoiled or duplicated, and the number of tax receipts retained (i.e., unused).

Where an independent candidate participates in the Province's political contributions tax credit system, that candidate's business manager must file, in prescribed form, a reconciliation of tax receipts provided for use during the campaign period, together with the aggregate amount of contributions receipted, in accordance with section 12 of *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*. Independent candidates campaign period reporting is submitted on the Campaign Period Report of Contributions (Independent Candidate) (Form P-606).

The aggregate value of political contribution tax credit receipts for 2002 was $2,010,183.89, for 2003 was $4,253,132.34, for 2004 was $1,811,834.88 and for 2005 was $2,070,248.98. $11,110 was receipted and reported for independent candidates for 2003. Registered political parties, which issued tax receipts, and the aggregate value of those receipts for 2001-2005, are set out in the following tables.

Political Contributions Receipted (Calendar Year 2001-2005)

Registered Political Party	Aggregate Receipted Contributions				
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005*
Green Party of Saskatchewan	-	-	-	-	$8,231.61
New Democratic Party, Sask. Section	$876,999.52	$1,003,187.32	$1,239,870.72	$855,799.18	1,016,582.49
New Green Alliance	8,500.00	8,883.16	17,081.30	13,373.00	-
Saskatchewan Liberal Association	54,171.80	65,132.00	261,013.39	122,556.38	166,084.88
Saskatchewan Party	723,452.00	932,981.41	2,705,533.69	816,063.40	877,500.00
Western Independence Party of Saskatchewan (W.I.P.)	-	-	18,523.24	4,042.92	1,850.00
Independent	-	-	11,110.00	-	-
Total	$1,663,123.32	$2,010,183.89	$4,253,132.34	$1,811,834.88	$2,070,248.98

Saskatchewan Tax Credits Claimed for Political Contributions (2001-2005)

Tax Year	Total
2001	$1,633,123.32
2002	2,010,183.89
2003	4,253,132.34
2004	1,811,834.88
2005*	2,070,248.98
Total Tax Credits claimed	$11,778,523.41

* Note: The information provided for 2005 is from fiscal returns as filed. Office review is ongoing and any required change will be reported in the subsequent Annual Report.

Pursuant to subsection 16(2) of the *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act* and section 232 of *The Election Act, 1996*, annual registered political party and independent candidate campaign filings, on Form P-602 and P-606, respectively, are available for public inspection at Elections Saskatchewan.

D. Annual Reporting, Statutory Compliance and Public Disclosure

1. Annual Reporting

On April 1, 1949, the Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Printing reported to the Legislative Assembly that they unanimously agreed:

> ... election expenses be shown (in Public Accounts) not only in total for each electoral division but that there be made available to each Member a detailed listing of the expenditures for his particular electoral division; these listings to be ... available to opposition and government alike.

In accordance with the Select Standing Committee's recommendation, the office prepared and distributed the Detail of Expenditures (referring to non-election, election and by-election expenditures, for fiscal years 2005-2006) to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, the Leader of the Opposition, the Clerk of the Executive Council, and Members of the Legislative Assembly. The Detail of Expenditures was prepared and tabled in the Legislative Assembly as set out in the following table.

Elections Saskatchewan - Detail of Expenditures
(Fiscal Years 2005-2006)

Documents Tabled	Date Tabled
Detail of Expenditures The Election Act, 1996 Provincial Constituencies Fiscal Year 2005-2006	May 10, 2006

In addition to the recommendation of the Select Standing Committee, statutory reporting is the means by which the Legislative Assembly has directed the Office to report on activities managed by the Chief Electoral Officer. Such reporting, in addition to outlining the conduct of each electoral event and financial practices related therefore to, provides an annual update of Office activities for consideration by the Legislative Assembly and members of the public. The Office, pursuant to sections 7 and 286 of *The Election Act, 1996*, and *The Tabling of Documents Act, 1991*, prepared and tabled the following reports in the Legislative Assembly from April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006.

Elections Saskatchewan - Tabled Reports
(April 1, 2005 - March 31, 2006)

Report Tabled	Date Tabled
Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Saskatchewan Compendium 2003-2005	July 27, 2005

To comply with sections 174, 221, 233 and 262 of *The Election Act, 1996*, the Office also published the following notices in *The Saskatchewan Gazette* from April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006, as set out in the following table.

ELECTIONS SASKATCHEWAN PUBLISHED NOTICES - THE SASKATCHEWAN GAZETTE
(APRIL 1, 2005 - MARCH 31, 2006)

DATE GAZETTED	VOLUME/NUMBER	GAZETTED ITEM
May 13, 2005	Vol. 101 No. 19	Amendment of the name and abbreviation of the name from New Green Alliance to the Green Party of Saskatchewan and that the abbreviation of the Green Party of Saskatchewan is Green Party.
January 27, 2006	Vol. 102 No. 4	Province of Saskatchewan Expense Limits for the twelve-month period ended December 31, 2006.
March 31, 2006	Vol. 102 No. 13	Revised adjusted amounts of the Province of Saskatchewan Expense Limits for the twelve-month period ended December 31, 2006, pursuant to clause 221(7)(b) of *The Election Act, 1996*, and further to the coming into force on March 22, 2006 of *The Election Amendment Act, 2006*.

In support of the heightened transparency objective of *The Election Act, 1996*, the foregoing reports, documents and notices are available for public review at Elections Saskatchewan.

2. STATUTORY COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE

The Election Act, 1996, places a duty on the Office to assist registered political parties, candidates, chief official agents and business managers to discharge administrative and financial reporting responsibilities, to compile requisite support documentation, and to disclose annual and electoral financial details in accordance with *The Election Act, 1996*, and *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*. To this end, the Office previously published the following guidance documentation, pursuant to section 5 and Part VII (Registration and Election Financing) of *The Election Act, 1996*: i) Registered Political Party's Guide to Provisions of *The Election Act, 1996*, (Form E-508); ii) Chief Official Agent's Guide to Provisions of *The Election Act, 1996*, (Form E-520); iii) Auditor's Guide to Provisions of *The Election Act, 1996*, (Form E-528); iv) Candidate's Guide to Provisions of *The Election Act, 1996*, (Form E-400); v) Business Manager's Guide to Provisions of *The Election Act, 1996*, (Form E-402); and vi) Auditor's Guide to Provisions of *The Election Act, 1996*, (Form E-404).

Forms E-400, E-402 and E-404 have been updated with section references and revised to take into account the amendments proclaimed March 22, 2006. At the time of writing Form E-508, E-520 and E-528 are being updated with section references and revised to take into account the amendments proclaimed March 22, 2006.

Further, to outline the statutory obligations under the system governing registered political parties' and independent candidates' acceptance of eligible contributions and the issuance of official tax receipts, the Office also previously prepared and disseminated the *Guide to Provisions of The Political Contributions Tax*

Credit Act, 2001 (*Registered Political Party*) (Form E-600) and The *Guide to Provisions of the Political Contributions Tax Credit Act, 2001* (*Independent Candidate*) (Form E-604).

3. Public Disclosure / Relations

In accordance with section 232 of *The Election Act, 1996*, the Chief Electoral Officer will supply any person who so requests copies of, or extracts from, registers or any report, return or document pertaining to a registered political party or candidate, which are statutorily filed with the Office. It should be noted that such reports, returns and documents may not be complete or may contain errors/omissions, as the Office's review and verification of such documentation may not have been completed at time of initial public inspection. Following Office review and verification, all finalized reports, returns and documents remain available for public inspection at Elections Saskatchewan.

The Office also maintains a public relations program to raise political stakeholder and public awareness of important aspects of the Office's mandate, to respond to public enquires, and to liaise with registered political parties, candidates and their chief official agents and business managers.

E. Operational Expenditures - Elections Saskatchewan

The Office annually presents budgetary expenditure estimates by function - administration, constituency returning office maintenance and annual electoral related activities - to the Board of Internal Economy. Actual annual administration and constituency level financial results for fiscal year 2005-2006 are set out in summary form in the following table.

Operational Expenditures - Elections Saskatchewan
Fiscal Year 2005 - 2006

Expenditure Code	Administration	Constituencies (58)
Operational		
Personal Services	$359,390.44	$42,658.00
Contractual Services	300,456.94	-
Advertising	55,652.71	-
Travel and Business	24,449.59	5,940.84
Supplies and Services	16,022.90	-
Assets Expensed	4,396.36	-
Total	$760,365.94	$48,598.84

Note: Refer to the Appendix for current year financial statements and notes.

For detailed annual constituency expenditure reporting refer to the *Detail of Expenditures Fiscal Year 2005-2006* tabled by the Minister of Finance on May 10, 2006.

VII. Financial Administration of Provincial General Elections

The Chief Electoral Officer is charged with administering the Province's electoral statute, and with assessing and, where applicable, reimbursing eligible election expenses paid from the Province's Consolidated Revenue Fund. The Office has established a system of financial review and audit to certify public reimbursement of election expenses by reviewing financial practices, documents and disclosure of registered political parties and candidates. The expenses and income of registered political parties, candidates are reported, the returns are audited and Elections Saskatchewan expenses are noted. There were no provincial general elections to report on in this fiscal year.

VIII. Liaison

To improve the electoral process in Saskatchewan, the Office reviews and assesses new electoral administrative initiatives on an on-going basis. In order to be kept up-to-date on innovations in other jurisdictions and in order to gauge public expectations liaison with others is desirable.

In 2005/2006 fiscal year, Office representatives participated in federal, provincial and territorial electoral meetings, and conferences as summarized below:

A. Council on Government Ethics Laws (COGEL)

The Chief Electoral Officer attended the December 2005 COGEL Conference in Boston, Massachusetts, USA and was the moderator of a session on Internet voting.

B. Conference of Canadian Election Officials - 2005

Federal, provincial and territorial Chief Electoral Officers and senior staff have met annually since 1975 at the Conference of Canadian Election Officials to discuss all facets of electoral administration. From, July 6 to 8, 2005, Elections Yukon hosted the 2005 Conference of Canadian Election Officials in Whitehorse. The Chief Electoral Officer and Assistant Chief Electoral Officer attended the Conference on behalf of Elections Saskatchewan. Deliberations focused on: electoral innovations and pilot projects, promoting democracy in schools, the Electoral Technology Accord, sharing and partnerships, judicial recounts, quality management, automation of campaign finance reporting, processing and disclosure, fixed election date implications, and electoral reform (Citizen's Assembly on Electoral Reform and Referendum process).

C. Consultations with Elections Canada - National Register of Electors Advisory Committee

Elections Canada's National Register of Electors Advisory Committee was formed in 1999 to discuss the further development of maintenance of the national permanent voters' registry. The Committee was to provide an ongoing forum for: (i) sharing information to improve the maintenance and use of electronic electoral databases; and (ii) discussing Elections Canada's initiatives for sharing the national registry with provincial and territorial jurisdictions. On behalf of Elections Saskatchewan, the Chief Electoral Officer and Assistant Chief Electoral Officer participated in a Committee meeting on July 8, 2005 in Whitehorse. The Assistant Chief Electoral Officer represented the Office at a Committee meeting in Ottawa on November 17 to 18, 2005.

D. Electoral Technology Accord

An Electoral Technology Accord (ETA) was first discussed in 2003 and then approved in 2004 by the Chief Electoral Officers of all Canadian provincial, territorial and federal electoral jurisdictions. A working group was formed early in 2005 to work on common data models for electors, addresses, events, candidates, sites and results. In July 2005, the Steering Committee (composed of the Chief Electoral Officers) accepted the working group's recommendations with respect to common data models and approved the suggested operating model for ongoing work of the ETA and the choice of the next business areas: elections finance and electoral geography.

In addition to several teleconferences, the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer represented Elections Saskatchewan as its member of the working group of the Electoral Technology Accord in meetings in Montreal (October 2005), Winnipeg (April 2006). The Manager of Election Finances and the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer represented the Office at the Electoral Finance workshop in Montreal (October 2005) and the Manager of Election Operations and Communications and the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer represented the Office at the Electoral Geography workshops in Ottawa (November 2005) and Winnipeg (April 2006).

The work of the ETA is strengthening the sharing culture among the jurisdictions participating in the accord. The meetings and workshops have increased awareness of the vast bank of knowledge and resources that exists within the jurisdictions. The cooperative atmosphere created by the ETA has built a forward-thinking environment that encourages cooperation and sharing of resources among electoral jurisdictions. There are many examples of shared knowledge and resources including Election Saskatchewan's plan to develop a register of electors using the common data model as a guide and Alberta's AROES software as a base (outlined in the Strategic Initiatives section of this report at page 10).

The data model for the elections finance and electoral geography business areas, the continuation of the working groups in these two areas, as well as the new business area of training will be the subject of a report on the work of the working group. The report will be presented at the annual Conference of Canadian Election Officials in July 2006.

E. Educational Liaison

The Chief Electoral Officer gave presentations to the Saskatchewan Social Sciences Teachers' Institute in April 2005. The Chief Electoral Officer and Assistant Chief Electoral Officer gave a presentation about the electoral process in Saskatchewan to four Legislative Interns in January 2006.

F. Ongoing Liaison

Throughout the reporting period, the Office has received valuable assistance from all Canadian federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions while researching best practices in other jurisdictions. The spring of 2004 brought the launch of the Canadian Election Resource Library (CERL). This on-line resource is based at Elections Manitoba. A nominal annual subscription fee from the various electoral offices across the country subsidizes the coordinator's salary and benefits. CERL members may interact with other CERL members by replying to messages or by starting their own message thread. CERL members may also view on-line forms, legislation, manuals/guides, policies and reports from other jurisdictions across the country.

IX. Recommendations - Amendments to The Election Act, 1996

Major changes were made to *The Election Act, 1996*, which were proclaimed on March 22, 2006. As stated in the *Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Saskatchewan Compendium 2003-2005* the advent of the regularization of the Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on a fiscal year basis brings the opportunity for the Chief Electoral Officer to make recommendations on amendments to *The Election Act* on a regular basis.

A. New Recommendations Since the Previous Annual Report

The following recommendation is as a result of the experience of implementing the amendments, which were proclaimed March 22, 2006 and the practical experience of the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election, which at the time of writing is partway through the election calendar.

1. Exemption of Mobile, Advance and Hospital Polls from Identification Requirements [Subsection 71(1)]

   Background: As part of the provisions streamlining absentee voting, the requirement for having another resident voter in the same constituency, who was not related, sign both the absentee voter application form and the certificate envelope containing the ballot to be returned to the returning office was deleted. Instead the absentee voter is asked to sign a declaration and provide satisfactory proof of the voter's identity and place of ordinary residence with their application form. Similarly all persons required to make a declaration must provide satisfactory proof of the voter's identity and place of ordinary residence. This has led to anomalies whereby a voter in a mobile or advance poll, who is on the voter's list would be asked to sign a declaration and provide satisfactory proof of the voter's identity and place of ordinary residence. It also should be clarified in legislation that eligible voters who are in hospitals, remand centres or temporarily displaced polls on Election Day should not have to provide satisfactory proof of voter's identity and place of ordinary residence. Persons in hospitals, remand centres and temporarily displaced polls normally do not have identification with them, therefore making the oath/declaration on the certificate envelope sufficient.

   Recommendation: That *The Election Act, 1996*, be amended to clarify that, persons served by a mobile poll or voting at an advance poll who are on the voter's list not be required to provide satisfactory proof of the voter's identity and place of ordinary residence. These voters should be like any other voters whose names are on the voter's list and who are not required to produce identification. Similarly, that *The Election Act, 1996*, be amended to clarify that, persons who are in a hospital on Election Day not be required to provide satisfactory proof of the voter's identity and place of ordinary residence. Voters in hospitals have never been required to produce

identification, as it is not realistic to expect that the person in hospital will have access to the necessary identification. The amendments, proclaimed March 22, 2006, may have inadvertently suggested that hospital voters, who are required to take a declaration on the certificate envelope, also need to provide satisfactory proof of the voter's identity and place of ordinary residence. This should not be the case.

2. Review of the Enforcement and Prosecution Provisions of *The Election Act, 1996*

Background: While the initial recommendation on whether to or not to prosecute alleged offences of *The Election Act, 1996*, lies with the Chief Electoral Officer, the final decision on whether to prosecute rests with the provincial Department of Justice and ultimately with the Minister of Justice. Herein lies an obvious potential conflict of interest should the individual who allegedly perpetrated the offence be a fellow candidate, caucus or cabinet colleague of the Minister of Justice. Across the country there are two distinct variations on the Minister of Justice deciding on whether or not to prosecute for alleged violations. In Quebec, Prince Edward Island, Yukon and Northwest Territories the decision on whether or not to prosecute rests with the Chief Electoral Officer. In Canada and Nunavut it is the decision of a commissioner on whether or not to initiate prosecution (Canada-Commissioner of Canada Elections and Nunavut-Integrity Commissioner). In Manitoba, it has long been the responsibility of the Chief Electoral Officer on whether to initiate prosecution. In recent amendments to Manitoba's electoral legislation, it has become the responsibility of a commissioner to decide on whether or not any prosecutions should be initiated.

For some minor alleged offences it is debatable whether the public interest will be served by attempting to prosecute the individual. Since 2000 the *Canada Elections Act* has made reference to compliance agreements. In Elections Canada's case, a compliance agreement is a voluntary agreement between the Commissioner and the person (the contracting party) in which they agree to terms and conditions that the Commissioner considers necessary to ensure compliance with the *Canada Elections Act*. A compliance agreement may include a statement by the contracting party in which he or she admits responsibility for the act or omission that constitutes the offence. It is important to note that the admission of responsibility does not constitute a criminal conviction by a Court of law and does not create a criminal record for the contracting party. In order to maintain transparency, a notice that sets out the contracting party's name, or omission in question and a summary of the compliance agreement is made public in the *Canada Gazette* and on the Elections Canada Web site.

Recommendation: That *The Election Act, 1996*, be reviewed with the intent to amend provisions pertaining to: the enforcement of provisions of *The Election Act, 1996*, initiation of prosecution for alleged violations of *The Election Act, 1996*, allowing for compliance agreements.

B. Review of Recommendations from the Previous Annual Report
(repeated below with any appropriate updates in bolded italics)

1. Nomination Paper and Name on Ballot Paper [Clause 35(3)(a) and Subsection 44(6)]

Background: Currently subsection 44(6)(a) of *The Election Act, 1996*, indicates that "The nomination paper must state: the name... of the candidate ..." and subsection 35(3)(a) states that "Every returning officer shall cause a printer to print on each ballot paper the names ... of the candidates as set out in the nomination papers ...". In the past few months the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer has had occasion to consider whether the term "name" is detailed enough. The determination of "last" or "family" name has been affected by the breaking up of relationships, the creation of new relationships, and how possible name changes including the hyphenation of last names may informally or formally result in the change of last names.

It has been the practice of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer to allow any contraction, abbreviation or nickname to be indicated, to be used on the ballot. The legislation in Manitoba formalizes the option of using an abbreviation or nickname.

Recommendation: That the term "name" or "names" be changed to "legal name" or "legal names" and additionally that "the individual must indicate the name, or any contraction or abbreviation of his or her name, or nickname, that he or she wishes to be used on the ballot papers in the election".

2. Advance Polling - Central Urban Locations [Section 129]

Background: The falling voter turnout at elections of all levels is a concern. The falling level of young voters (age 18 to 25) is even more alarming. New approaches and ideas to increase voter turnout should be explored. A recent research study on low voter turnout in Manitoba, prepared for Elections Manitoba and presented at the 2004 Conference of Canadian Election Officials noted that 63% of non-voters are "irregular voters". These voters will vote when circumstances allow. They planned on voting but other things got in the way. One way of increasing voter turnout, especially among "irregular voters" may be to bring the advance polls to the voters, or in other words bring the advance polls where voters already congregate such as in shopping malls. Centralized advance polls in the cities of Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon (and perhaps other cities) would serve not only the constituencies in the area surrounding each city but may also serve, for example, voters from other parts of the province who are visiting family members in the city who had not thought of applying for absentee voting, or whose plans had changed suddenly, and also employees who find themselves working outside their constituency of residence. A permanent list of electors would enable the poll officials in the central advance poll to check to see if the elector is on the list of electors and if so the poll official would give the elector a ballot and indicate on the list of electors that the elector has voted. In this way, for example, the young adults from all across the city who are hanging out at the mall in Regina; the

individual from La Ronge who is sent to attend a week long training session in Saskatoon a week before the election; the couple from Gravelbourg doing their shopping at the mall in Moose Jaw would all be able to vote at the central advance poll even though that advance poll is not located in their constituency. The province of British Columbia has a similar process that works well. The central advance poll locations would not be set up as an alternative to having at least one advance poll location in each constituency but rather as an additional alternative. ***Since the Annual Report Compendium 2003-2005, Manitoba has introduced legislation that will allow for residents and non-residents of the constituency, who are eligible voters, to vote at a central advance polling place to convenience voters and as a possible way to increase voter turn-out.***

Recommendation: That central advance polling locations be allowed to set up to service eligible voters from anywhere in the Province.

3. ADVANCE VOTING IN RETURNING OFFICES [SECTION 129]

Background: A number of other electoral jurisdictions in Canada (Manitoba, British Columbia, Ontario and New Brunswick) have advance polls located in Office of the returning officer. With a permanent list of electors on the horizon it is important to make voting as simple as possible. "A one-stop shopping" concept where an individual can be added to the list of electors and then vote at the same time in the same location would be advantageous and may increase voter turnout. ***In the Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election the deadline for receipt of absentee ballots was Sunday, June 11, eight days before Election Day. The advance polls began on Tuesday, June 13, six days before Election Day. Some persons came into the returning office on Monday, June 12 wanting to vote but were unable to do so because they were caught in between the absentee application deadline and the beginning of the advance polls. Anyone leaving the constituency on Monday, June 12, Tuesday, June 13, or before 3:00 p.m. on June 14 was without a voting opportunity. Advance polls in the Returning Office starting earlier in the election calendar would alleviate this shortfall.***

Recommendation: That advance polls be set up in the office of the returning officer starting earlier in the electoral calendar.

4. ELECTORAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Background: The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer established the first all-party Electoral Advisory Committee in the Fall of 2001. The Advisory Committee was formed to give registered political party representatives the opportunity to advise on the administration of *The Election Act, 1996*, and *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*, with a particular emphasis on the future needs of Saskatchewan's electorate and political stakeholders. The inaugural meeting was well received by all attending and was very useful in getting feedback for the administration of *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act*. Some jurisdictions have the composition set in legislation such as Manitoba's Advisory Committees as set out in *Manitoba's Elections Act* and *Elections Finances Act*

and Québec's Advisory Committee set out in *Québec's Election Act*. ***The committee met twice in the past year, once in November 2005 to discuss the Strategic Plan 2005-2011 and the then pending amendments to The Election Act and once in April 2006 to discuss preparations for the pending by-election in Weyburn-Big Muddy. It is our intention to fully utilize this vehicle for communication more regularly than in the past. The Office has already announced another meeting following the current ongoing Weyburn-Big Muddy by-election.***

Recommendation: That an electoral advisory committee be mandated under *The Elections Act, 1996*.

5. Leave from Employment for Returning Officers and Election Clerks

Background: The Chief Electoral Officer now appoints returning officers. The responsibilities of the returning officer are becoming more demanding, particularly with respect to computerization and technology. In Manitoba where returning officers are also appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer, the legislation allows for leave without pay without penalty for a number of individuals including returning officers and their assistants during the course of an election campaign. A provision for an employer to request an exemption if the leave would be deemed to seriously detrimental to the employer is also included. In the period leading up to the 2003 general election in Manitoba 30 returning officers and assistant returning officers applied for leave of absence without pay. Of these only two employers appealed to the Manitoba Labour Board, both of which were allowed. The leave of absence provisions allowed a number of professionals including a mixture of teachers, provincial and federal public service employees and private sector employees in various fields to become returning officers and assistant returning officers. Ontario and Québec have similar leave provisions for returning officers and other election officers.

Recommendation: That *The Election Act, 1996*, be amended to include provisions for a leave of absence without pay and without penalty for returning officers and election clerks during the election period.

6. Possible Extension for the Deadline for Receipt of the Registered Political Party's Annual Returns [Section 250]

Background: Currently the Chief Electoral Officer has no flexibility to extend the deadline for the submission of the Registered Political Party Annual Returns. On occasion personal circumstances may prevent the submission of the return on time. There should be flexibility for the Chief Electoral Officer to extend the deadline for valid reason.

Recommendation: That *The Election Act, 1996*, be amended to allow for the Chief Electoral Officer to grant an extension for the deadline for submission of Registered Political Party Annual Returns if the Chief Electoral Officer is satisfied that the registered political party has a valid reason for the request.

2005-2006 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND NOTES

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT MARCH 31
(Unaudited)

	2005-2006	2004-2005
Financial Assets		
Transfer Due from the General Revenue Fund	$ 22,516	$ 34,775
Liabilities		
Accounts payable	11,995	24,742
Accrued vacation pay	10,521	10,033
SubTotal	22,516	34,775
Net Debt	-	-
Non-financial Assets:		
Tangible capital assets	7,188	6,269
Prepaid expenses	-	-
SubTotal	7,188	6,269
Accumulated Surplus	$ 7,188	$ 6,269

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31
(Unaudited)

	2005-2006		2004-2005
Revenue:	**Budget**	**Actual**	**Actual**
Transfer from the General Revenue Fund:	$ 791,044	$ 808,967	$ 793,570
Miscellaneous Income	-	-	-
Total Revenues	$ 791,044	$ 808,967	$ 793,570
Expenses:			
Personal Services	434,350	402,048	388,318
Contractual Services	263,192	300,457	204,867
Advertising	32,500	55,653	22,399
Travel and Business	37,052	30,390	49,670
Supplies and Services	9,450	16,023	125,014
Amortization	-	3,477	6,212
Total Expenses	$ 776,544	$ 808,048	$ 796,480
Surplus/Deficit	$ 14,500	$ 919	($ 2,910)
Accumulated Surplus beginning of year		6,269	9,179
Accumulated Surplus End of Year		$ 7,188	$ 6,269

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
STATEMENT OF CHANGE IN NET DEBT
AS AT MARCH 31
(Unaudited)

	2005-2006	2004-2005
Annual Surplus	$ 919	($ 2,910)
Acquisition of capital assets	(4,396)	(3,302)
Amortization of capital assets	3,477	6,212
	(919)	2,910
Use of a prepaid expense	-	-
	-	-
(Increase) in Net Debt	-	-
Net debt, beginning of year		
Net debt, end of year	-	-

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31
(Unaudited)

	2005-2006	2004-2005
Operating:		
Cash received from:		
Transfer from the General Revenue Fund:	$ 808,967	$ 793,570
Miscellaneous Income	-	-
Total Cash Received	808,967	793,570
Cash paid for:		
Personal Services	402,048	388,318
Contractual Services	300,457	204,867
Advertising	55,653	22,399
Travel and Business	30,390	49,670
Supplies and Services	16,023	125,014
Equipment	-	-
Total Cash Paid Out	804,571	790,268
Cash Provided by Operating Transactions	4,396	3,302
Capital:		
Cash to acquire capital assets	(4,396)	(3,302)
Cash Applied to Capital Transactions	(4,396)	(3,302)
Increase (Decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	-	-
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of the year	-	-
Cash and cash equivalents, end of the year	-	-

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
MARCH 31, 2006

1. **Authority and Purpose**

   The Chief Electoral Officer is an officer of the Legislative Assembly and is appointed by resolution. The mandate of the Office is to administer provincial elections, enumerations other than during an election, and provincial election finances under *The Election Act, 1996*. The Office maintains the province's political contributions tax credit disclosure regime under *The Political Contributions Tax Credit Act, 2001*, and administers referenda, plebiscites and time votes according to *The Referendum and Plebiscite Act* and *The Time Act*.

2. **Summary of Accounting Policies**

   The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer used Canadian GAAP in the preparation of these financial statements. Significant accounting policies are described below:

   (a) **Basis of Accounting** - The financial statements are prepared using the expense basis of accounting.

   (b) **Revenue** - The Office receives statutory transfers from the General Revenue Fund to carry out required duties.

   (c) **Capital Assets** - Tangible capital assets are reported at cost less accumulated amortization. Beginning in 2005-2006 all capital assets are amortized on a straight-line basis over three to five years.

   (d) **Accrued Vacation Pay Liability** - Vacation entitlements earned but not taken are recorded as a liability.

3. **Capital Assets**

CUMULATIVE COMPARISON

	2005 - 2006			2004-2005		
CATEGORY	ORIGINAL COST	ACCUMULATED AMORTIZATION	NET BOOK VALUE	ORIGINAL COST	ACCUMULATED AMORTIZATION	NET BOOK VALUE
Computer Equipment	$44,086	$43,241	$845	$43,230	$42,462	$768
Office Equipment	6,373	3,624	2,749	3,345	2,909	436
Furniture	9,918	6,324	3,594	9,406	4,341	5,065
Total	**$60,377**	**$53,189**	**$7,188**	**$55,981**	**$49,712**	**$6,269**

4. Budget Figures - These are amounts presented annually to the Board of Internal Economy for the Office to carry out duties under *The Election Act, 1996*.

5. Costs Borne by Third Party Agencies - During the year the Office received certain administrative services from the Department of Finance and the Legislative Assembly without charge. No provision for these costs has been made in these statements.